



CITY OF AKRON, OHIO
POLICE DIVISION
AUGUSTUS A. HALL, CHIEF OF POLICE

NUMBER P-2009-042	EFFECTIVE DATE December 31, 2009	RESCINDS P-2007-042 Issued 1-10-07
SUBJECT Victim Assistance Program Procedure		ISSUING AUTHORITY Chief Augustus A. Hall

I. POLICY

It is well documented that most victims find some form of crisis intervention helpful and many require considerable emotional assistance in the aftermath of a violent crime or traumatic event. Therefore, the Akron Police Department will utilize the Victim Assistance Program which provides comprehensive services to all individuals affected by violent crimes and traumatic events.

II. PROCEDURE

A. SERVICES AVAILABLE FROM VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

1. Crisis intervention at crime scene, place of residence, hospital, and throughout the criminal justice system.
2. Debriefings in the immediate aftermath of traumatic incidents.
3. Counseling, long and short-term, for individuals, families, and groups.
4. Assistance with victim reparation: information, application forms and follow-up.
 - a. Victims of crime or dependents of victims who were injured or died as a result of a violent crime or OVI offense may seek compensation from the State of Ohio for physical injuries or death.
 - b. Police officers may be eligible for some out-of-pocket medical expense and time off work including secondary employment.
5. Assistance with civil protection orders, anti-stalking civil orders, and temporary protection orders.
6. Assistance with insurance forms, credit card and ID replacement, emergency food, minimal emergency financial assistance, repairs, clothes, and homicide cleanup where indicated.
7. Referral to pertinent community services, including Children Who Witness Violence.
8. Victim and witness assistance throughout the Prosecutor's Office and court system.
9. Extends service to anyone affected by a crime or a traumatic event. Victim Assistance advocates are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

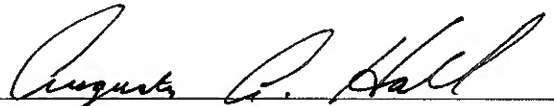
10. All services are provided at no cost to the victim.

B. OFFICER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Officers are encouraged to contact a Victim Assistance advocate through the DB Desk, dispatch, or the Victim Assistance hotline. Officers shall request the presence of a Victim Assistance advocate following any:
 - a. Homicide
 - b. Rape
 - c. Fatal or critical injury accidents and traumatic events.
 - d. Violent crime, including domestic violence, which involves hospitalization or serious injury.
 - e. Other call where the officer feels it would be of benefit to have a Victim Assistance advocate on scene. For example: elderly victims of crime, child abductions, child molestations, child abuse, etc.
 - f. Death notification
 - 1) Notification of the next of kin of the death of a family member is a difficult task even for experienced officers.
 - 2) All death notifications that are the responsibility of this agency shall be delivered in person unless the exigency of circumstance demands telephone notification. Death notifications that are the responsibilities of the Akron Police Department include homicides and/or questionable deaths.
 - 3) Notifications should be done as soon as information on the next of kin is gathered and officers have familiarized themselves with the essential details concerning the deceased (accuracy of address and primary person to be notified) and other pertinent information.
 - 4) Detective or officer required to advise a family of a death notification shall take a Victim Assistance advocate along to assist in the notification.
 - 5) Whenever possible, two officers should be assigned to a death notification.
 - 6) Every reasonable effort shall be made to make the death notification in the privacy of the survivor's home or in another location away from public scrutiny.
 - 7) Officer should address the survivor in a straightforward manner and use easy to understand language to briefly explain the circumstances of the incident and the fact that the individual is dead.
 - 8) Officer should remain alert to the possible need for medical assistance.

- 9) Officers shall not leave upon completion of the notification until reasonably assured that the survivor has adequate personal control and/or family, close friend or clergy join the victim for emotional support or arrange for transportation of the victim to other appropriate support.
2. Information and referral – Before leaving the scene it is important that officers take the steps necessary to meet the victim's needs for support and information. This can include providing a brief overview of what actions will be taken, answering questions, and providing telephone numbers. Officers should provide information on victim service agencies available in the community. Officers should encourage the victim to report any additional information about the incident.
3. Officers assigned the task of continuing an investigation involving a crime against a person should provide the Victim Assistance Program staff with any information that the officer feels may be helpful to them when contacting the victim.
 - a. Advocates will defer to the officer in charge by not detracting from or interfering with the interviewing and law enforcement process.
 - b. Advocates are strictly bound by confidentiality with regards to all departmental activity and information.
4. If a Victim Assistance advocate responds to the scene, officers are required to stand by in order to ensure the safe arrival and departure of the Victim Assistance advocate, unless relieved by the advocate.
5. All calls involving violence where children are present shall be referred to Children Who Witness Violence through the Victim Assistance advocate.
6. Lack of information about case status is one of the greatest sources of dissatisfaction among victims of crime and crime survivors. Investigators/officers should leave names and numbers where the victim can reach the case investigator.

By Order Of,


Augustus A. Hall
Chief of Police

Date 12 - 24 - 09